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Camp Guernsey range fire Thursday update

CAMP GUERNSEY, Wyo. – Fire crews continue to work on an approximately 6,500-acre fire on Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center's North Training Area today.

The south edge of the fire, which started Tuesday during a training exercise, is approximately 4.5 miles north of Guernsey Reservoir. The fire is not burning on private land. More than 120 state, local and military responders are fighting the fire.

"The terrain, winds and dry conditions make this a very complex fire scenario," said Dan Perko, deputy state forester. "It could be five to seven more days before crews are off the scene."

Two commercial air tankers have joined the Wyoming Army National Guard's UH-60 helicopters in the aerial fight today. Yesterday, aircrews dropped more than 30,000 gallons of water on the fire's hottest spots using sling-loaded 640-gallon buckets.

Lt. Col. Deanne Vogel, deputy camp commander, said camp command thinks a tracer round fired from a Squad Automatic Weapon is to blame for the fire. Bans which were in place for pyrotechnics have been modified to include tracer rounds until weather conditions improve.

"Units are still training at the camp and in our North Training Area," she said. "The fire is posing some logistical challenges for a few of the units, but we are assisting them to ensure their training experience continues to meet or exceed their expectations."

Agencies currently assisting the fire fighting efforts include the Wheatland Rural, Guernsey City, Guernsey Rural, Fort Laramie, Lingle, Palmer Canyon and Antelope Gap fire departments. Military assets include the 1/168th Det. 1, C Company GSAB, from Reno, Nev., and the 153rd Engineer Battalion, from Huron, S. D. The Wyoming Civil Air Patrol also assisted with fire reconnaissance efforts yesterday.